

MEDIA RELEASE



**Attention: News Director
For Immediate Release
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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
DAVID L. HUBER
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Western District of Kentucky**

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LOUISVILLE MAN FOUND GUILTY OF FIREARM CHARGE

David L. Huber, United States Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky, announced today that **THOMAS W. MCLAURIN**, age 29, of Louisville, Kentucky, in Jefferson County, was **found guilty** by a federal jury in United States District Court, Louisville, Kentucky, of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

The jury's verdict of guilty was returned following a two-day trial before Charles R. Simpson III, Judge, United States District Court.

McLaurin, a three-time convicted felon, was found guilty of possessing a loaded .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol. The evidence at trial established that on December 22, 2002, a Louisville Metropolitan Police Department officer observed **McLaurin** driving a 1994 Dodge Intrepid. The officer checked the registration of the vehicle and learned that the license tag on the vehicle **McLaurin** was driving belonged to a 1995 Buick. The officer began following the vehicle, but before he could turn on his emergency equipment to stop **McLaurin**, Mr. **McLaurin** pulled the automobile into the front yard of a residence and stopped.

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The officer got out of his police car and approached **McLaurin**, who was still seated in the vehicle with the driver's door partially open. **McLaurin** then accelerated away from the scene and the officer gave chase in his police vehicle.

As he attempted to elude the officer, **McLaurin** drove away at a high rate of speed on the wrong side of the road. The pursuit ended when **McLaurin** jumped from the vehicle while it was still moving. The automobile continued rolling and struck a pickup truck before coming to a stop, causing damage to the pickup truck. The officer pursued **McLaurin** on foot through the neighborhood and eventually caught him and arrested him on state criminal charges.

Upon returning to the vehicle, the officer searched the passenger compartment and discovered a loaded .40 caliber semiautomatic pistol on the passenger seat along with a box of ammunition on the front floorboard.

The maximum potential penalties are life imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and supervised release for a period of 3 years.

This is a **Project Backfire** prosecution. **Project Backfire** is a partnership of state and federal law enforcement that targets firearms offenders for prosecution to the fullest extent of state and federal law.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas W. Dyke, and was investigated by the Louisville Metro Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

McLaurin is scheduled to be sentenced before Judge Simpson on July 11, 2005, at 11:00 a.m., in Louisville, Kentucky.

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